

**ANALYSIS OF CURRENT MARKETING STRATEGIES USED BY THE CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION**

STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT OF CHANGE

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ABSTRACT

The problem identified in this research project was that the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) does not market itself to the public or it's employees. The purpose of this research paper was to analyze current marketing strategies used by the department.

The study used descriptive research methodology to answer the following questions:

1. What strategies are being used to market the department to the public?
2. What strategies are being used to market the department to its employees?
3. What concepts can be used by CDF to improve it's marketing to both the public and it's employees?

Procedures involved research materials from fire service periodicals, publications, and personal communications. Information on change management from the Strategic Management of Change Program at the National Fire Academy was also used. Examined were current strategies used by the department as well as ideas and strategies used by the private and public sector.

Results of the study identified the fact that a marketing plan was absent within the department or intentions to effectively market the department to the public or it's employees. Also identified were current ideas and strategies

being used successfully by the private as well as other public sector agencies. Recommendations resulting from this research indicated that a comprehensive marketing strategy be developed in addition to improvement in communications within the department as well as to the public.

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INTRODUCTION

The problem is that the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) does not market itself to the public or it's employees. The purpose of this research paper is to analyze current marketing strategies used by the department.

The study uses descriptive research methodology to answer the following questions:

1. What strategies are being used to market the department to the public?
2. What strategies are being used to market the department to its employees?
3. What concepts can be used by CDF to improve it's marketing to both the public and it's employees?

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) is one of the premier fire agencies in California. It is a full service fire department and resource management agency that provides emergency response in 34 of California's 58 counties. In addition, it regulates and inspects timber harvesting on private lands and is the states' fire safety agency providing leadership to local government in fire prevention education, engineering and enforcement. CDF protects the natural resources on 42 million acres of wildland in California, but more

importantly it protects all the citizens within those acres, their homes and businesses. CDF contracts with 128 different cities and local entities to provide their fire, rescue and hazardous materials emergency services. In 1998 CDF responded to over 200,000 emergencies, performed 2,000 timber harvest inspections and made roughly 5,000 life safety inspections of large commercial/public occupancies in California. Most of these emergencies were not wildland emergencies. CDF routinely responds to jurisdictions outside its normal boundaries and occasionally outside the state as well. CDF is routinely tasked during disasters by the Governor's Office of Emergency Services to manage and supplement other agency's emergencies. CDF is a leader in managing major emergencies of all kinds, both inside and outside its jurisdictional boundaries. These include wild fires, floods, earthquakes, hazardous materials emergencies, riots, snowstorms and some non-emergency events. To do this it has 12 Incident Command Teams made up of 25 members, each that are on call all year-round to respond to any of the state's disasters, in any jurisdiction.

CDF has 635 fire stations, 230 state funded plus 405 local funded, which house 1,027 fire engines, 103 rescue squads, 12 aerial ladder trucks, 58 fire dozers, 5 mobile communications centers, 11 mobile kitchens. It also has 45 conservation camps

which house 195 fire crews; 13 air bases that house 19 air tankers and 13 air tactics planes; 9 heli-attack bases which house 11 helicopters and their crews and 24 fire lookouts. In addition CDF funds 82 fire engines and 12 fire dozers in counties it contracts to. All told, CDF employs more than 5,200 full time fire professionals, 5,600 volunteer suppression personnel, 4,300 inmate, ward and corpsmember firefighters, 2,500 volunteers in prevention, and 230 foresters.

The CDF is geographically divided into 21 administrative Units; each managed by a Unit Chief. Each Unit is set up like it's own fire department with a typical fire department rank structure and hierarchy. Each Unit Chief reports to a Region Chief, who in turn reports to a Deputy Director of the department. Part of CDF's organizational uniqueness comes from the variety of programs provided, such as suppression, prevention, law enforcement, fleet management, conservation camps, air bases, command centers, and resource management. CDF's human resources provide a unique diversity of skills, and fill a wide range of positions aside from that of a typical firefighter.

CDF's unique mission and diversity of organization enables the department to provide the citizens of California a value-added level of service, yet citizens and employees alike do not know the service the department provides, it's capabilities or

that it does more than wildland fire suppression. All too often CDF is miss- identified by the media, mainly in name, it's cooperators do not realize CDF's full mission capabilities, nor do political entities understand that CDF can provide contractual services to that community at a far reduced cost than it can provide or purchase for itself. The department faces the constant crisis of who we are and what we do. This problem is not only an external identification but an internal one. Its employees suffer at times a complex of what their job is and how they are viewed by the public. The failure of the department to effectively market and educate the public and it's employees has created a constant problem for the department to secure funding as well as recruit personnel.

This applied research project utilizes the Strategic Management of Change, Change Management Model, Task 2.6 to assist in analyzing how the department markets itself to the public they serve, it's employees and to look at how it can improve what it is doing in those areas.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A literature review was conducted to identify the significance and impact of existing marketing techniques internal and external to the department. Relevant material was summarized and grouped based upon the corresponding research questions.

1. What strategies are being used to market the department to the public?

According to the American Marketing Association's definition, marketing is " the process of planning and executing conception, pricing, promotion and distribution of ideas, goods and services to organizational objectives." (Peter and Donnelly, 1986, p. 9)

As a community service provider, our product is much different than most in the business sector, whether it be a tangible product or that of a service.

"Fire departments can no longer ignore or underestimate the need for effective public relations. Departments will only be able to meet the economic challenges of the future by creating positive public perceptions of our missions and our services. The fire service does a good job at recognizing that some of the services they provide affect the public's perception of the department. However, fire service personnel often view their services as independent functions and they fail to see their services as public relations activities" (Baum, 1992).

St. John states, "Every day that a fire department is not actively marketing a positive message, the citizens may be receiving potentially damaging images and impressions about the department from a variety of other sources.

"Marketing is not the same thing as advertising. Getting the message across is the goal of marketing. The simple everyday things you do from answering phone calls, having clean uniforms, to response time and business cards all are marketing. Creativity is used to more than money." (St. John, 1994, p. 33).

"It is therefore that we must provide service to a customer base, the folks we respond to and who call us to get themselves out of the mess they find themselves in." (Brunacini, 1996, p. 46)

Brunacini goes onto state, "Everyone in the community recognizes us, has at least some interest in what we do, and basically starts out with the positive feeling that we are the friendly helpers you call when something hurts. We should regard our community profile as a unique opportunity."

An opportunity is noted by Lavoie, "Educational programs must be established to identify and educate three basic market sectors; the department's members, the elected officials and the public. These educational programs need to focus on the proactive measures being taken by the fire department to ensure public safety". (Lavoie, 1995, p. 62)

Continuing with the issue of service and public safety, "For every service we offer, the value to the customer is always

measured in their level of safety. The lower the risk to the customer, the higher the value of the services our department provides." (Crawford, 1994, p.5)

The gratis positive image the fire department receives is described well by Brunacini,

"We make ourselves very obvious on purpose. The characteristics that cause people to notice us and get out of our way set the stage for widespread interest in us. Our presence indicates an event and intervention is underway, and normal people quickly recognize us and connect our presence with something at least potentially exciting going on. This socialization starts early with kids playing with toy fire trucks that become a familiar and affectionate form/ symbol to them. Most parents don't have the kid checked if he/ she says at four years old that they want to become a firefighter when they grow up." (Brunacini, 1996, p.45)

Fortunately, most fire departments already have a positive public image. "All it takes is a creative, enthusiastic representative talking to the right people and your agency can have lots of positive publicity." (Kallman, 1994-1995, p.15)

CDF's version of this is the Public Information Officer for the department. From the centralized office of the Public

Information section in Sacramento comes CDF's communication to the public. Karen Terrill is the Public Information Officer for the department. She states,

"The word "marketing" has some very specific meaning to me, and with one exception, I really don't think it applies to what CDF does, internally or externally. I would use the word "communicating" for what we do internally. And our public outreach from my shop, is not public relations, but rather "public information". I make that distinction because PR and Marketing bring to mind big budgets and slick publications and campaigns. We don't do any of that. First, my shop has virtually no money for public outreach. We don't buy time or products to get the word out. We rely on news coverage and public affairs. I write a report that goes to the Resources Agency every week providing them with information on what the Department is doing. They then forward what they think is appropriate to the Governor's office." (K. Terrill personal communication, August 16, 2000)

Relying on news coverage and public affairs does not seem to satisfy the need of fixing who CDF is and what it does. To illustrate this fact, Assistant Chief Bill Holmes of the Butte Unit observes,

"CDF is recognized as only a seasonal wildland firefighting

agency and an enforcer of timber harvesting regulations. The State Fire Marshal Office is recognized as a fire service agency due to its name, however I doubt the public fully understands what it does. Most urban dwellers do not know who or what CDF is. New employees come into CDF not knowing all the services the department provides. The department name and acronym (CDF) is not well known and does not clearly define the service it most often provides." (B. Holmes, personal communications, July 27, 2000)

The problem stated by Holmes reaches further than an issue the public not being familiar with who we are and what we do but goes on to greater issues that face the department.

"Who is CDF? What service(s) does it provide? Does every legislator and citizen in California know who the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) is and what we do? In the case of a government organization like CDF, the mission must be clearly defined and recognized by the public (our customers) for what it does. The name, or logo, of the organization must clearly and simply define the service being provided. Every symbol an organization projects must tell the customer (the taxpayer) what it is that it provides. Every citizen in California, whether living in an urban, suburban or rural setting, should know what CDF is and the service it provides. In short, CDF must

do a better job marketing itself if it wishes to attract the best employees it can, gain legislative and public support for competitive salaries/benefits to retain those that started with CDF and not loose them to better paying fire departments." (B. Holmes, personal communications, July 27, 2000)

To assist with this vision of what the department is and what can be done to improve it's image, Holmes continues, "Marketing includes adopting a logo that is easily spoken, the public quickly recognizes and understands, utilizing the web page more, placing the logo on every press release, letterhead and business card, marking every CDF vehicle, facility, helmet, nomex shirt and uniform hat, with the new logo. The acid test will be when we can ask any citizen on the streets of San Francisco, San Jose, Los Angeles and Sacramento who CDF (using the new logo) and they know who it is and what it does."

Public education programs within the department are commonly viewed as a way to market the department.

"Smokey Bear is a tool that is far overused and gives a misconception of who we are and what we do. This icon perpetuates the idea that we are solely a wildland fire suppression agency. We do not project the "All Risk" nature of the department with Smokey Bear. Kids love him but the adults cannot connect Smokey with municipal fire

suppression, technical rescue or EMS and they are the ones paying the taxes and governing the department." (S. Herzog personal communications, July 24, 2000)

Each administrative Unit performs their own versions of public education throughout the state. Fire Captain Curt Itson of the Santa Clara Unit describes their programs.

"The Santa Clara Unit is unique in that it is in the heart of the Silicon Valley. It is very populous compared to other areas in the state. Due to this fact, our public education and marketing is much different. Our public education and prevention focuses on a more urban customer. We use a tri-fold pamphlet that contains facts and figures regarding the Unit. This is handed out at every possible situation when an inquiry is made about the department, during public education programs and in media packets when performing public information duties. The media in Santa Clara is abundant and is the best source of advertising who we are and what we do. We are constantly creating a positive relationship with the media. They are becoming more and more educated about CDF. Other items we are looking at that we hope to have an impact is a Customer Service Survey tool and billboard advertising that relays a safety or prevention message. A tool used to educate our cooperators is through joint training exercises or classes and participation in

prevention task forces such as Fire Safe Councils."

(C. Itson, personal communications, August 20, 2000)

Another identification issue in marketing the department was the previous work uniform.

"When we wore the khaki and green, people would ask if the lake was stocked, where they could get a good campsite, if the fruit was recently inspected in the market, etc., etc. Since the change to the traditional fire service blue uniform, this has not been such an issue. I think it has been a most positive change, assisting with our identity and improving morale." (J. Wenner personal communication, July 8, 2000)

There are a variety of schools of thought on how CDF should be providing information to the public and how noted experts feel a department needs to project it's image. Current marketing concepts range from communication mediums such as printed material to membership in cooperative ventures. Other visual marketing presents itself through outward appearance of its employees.

2. What strategies are being used to market the department to its employees?

The public is not the only element of the organization that requires marketing and quality customer service. Brunacini describes the condition as follows,

"We create a human customer reaction in response to how our human firefighters look and what we are doing. The impression is created and maintained by the direct and indirect impression and feeling the customers develop in response to the appearance, performance and behavior of our members." (Brunacini, 1996, P.53)

To create the mentioned impression our human resources require proper care and feeding to keep them motivated and in the proper mindset. Some issues to be addressed in this manner are noted by Holmes,

"It takes more than just a decent salary and benefits package to attract new employees or retain existing ones. New employees are attracted to companies and/or agencies that have great reputations for the product or service they provide. They want to be associated with organizations that not only appear professional, but are professional. Employees must also be able to stand behind the service or product they are providing. They must be proud to provide that service or sell that product." (B. Holmes, personal communications, July 27, 2000)

Internal communications are an essential element of maintaining the professionalism noted by Holmes. Terrill discusses some ways the department provides the communication link, "Internally, of course we have the Communiqué which is now a quarterly newsletter. And the website which provides information for the public and staff via the Internet and the Intranet. Of course for emergency communications, we do a fine job of

internal exchange of information within the Incident Command System. And for major incidents the teams do a great job of reaching out to our local cooperators and subject matter experts. The Information Technology unit manages the bulletin board within the Outlook email system. That has proven to be a pretty effective communications tool over the years as well."

(K. Terrill personal communication, August 16, 2000)

"Rewards for performing quality work are ways of servicing the internal customer and marketing ideas to other members of the department. Annual awards such as the Superior Achievement Award or the Innovations Award attempt to capture this spirit." (C. Itson, personal communications, August 20, 2000)

Another element that is part of the department to market what the department is to its membership is the union.

"CDF Firefighters probably does the most to support the internal customer. The department does a pretty poor job of marketing what it is to it's membership. Typically it leaves this task to the union to carry the message of who we are, what the department has to provide for. Look at any union newsletter or the union website. Constantly there is a lack of support for it's employees from management other than some words during a speech or to the press. The uniform issue displayed how portions of the department's administration supported a change while others fought it or

idly stood by. It took the union to push the issue to protect personnel, as well as changing the public's image of who we were." (J. Wenner personal communication, July 8, 2000)

The comments of the individuals interviewed solidified the needs of the department in creating a marketing plan for its internal customer.

3. What concepts can be used by CDF to improve its marketing to both the public and its employees?

John Buckman in Fire Chief (October 1995) states, "The goal is to communicate a message to some person or persons in order to get a response. It is necessary to understand this marketing process in order to develop effective promotional plans. 4 tools form the promotional mix in an organization: 1. Advertising, which is designed for quick consumption, rendering information on what the department does, what it needs and how to contact it. 2. Publicity is the tool that develops and disseminates news bringing favorable attention to a product, person, place or cause. Publicity stimulates the interest in the activity. 3. Marketing activities that project your message. Sales promotion ideas are ones that stimulate interest. 4. Personal selling. Relating of positive experiences which encourage others to become involved."

Crawford, 1994 continues with this idea, "Unless the fire service is willing to identify the customer's real needs and design products that meet them effectively it will continue to exist but will never be more than second rate."

To avoid this, the fire service has had to change its overall strategy.

"If a department is going to be successful in obtaining resources necessary to carry out its missions, it must engage in marketing techniques that are relatively new to us." (Lavoie, 1995, p.63)

Some of the new thought in providing this changed service is noted by Carter, "We need to learn what the public thinks about the fire department. Fire department employees think of themselves as vital and integral parts of their community. However, there are some citizens who consider the community fire service as a marginal player." (Carter, 1994, p.36)

Brunacini continues with this idea, "Customers and their problems don't come with an instruction manual, so long-term, excellent service performance is the result of a refined system where empowered firefighters operate as much between the lines as they do on the line." (Brunacini, 1996, p.27)

He continues with this idea, "A progressive change in our mentality (and approach) involves regarding everyone we encounter, both directly and indirectly, as a person who is our customer." (Brunacini, 1996, p.43)

"Even though we have the best intentions for providing the highest possible level of service, we should try to give the

public what it wants, not what we think they ought to have." (Marinucci & Baldwin, 1989, p. 25)

"Customer surveys are a very useful tool in our quest to understand the needs of the community we serve. Surveys often provide fire service leaders with answers that are very different from what they expect to receive. Members of the fire service have a firm grasp on the need for their existence and often assumes that the citizens do too. The problem is, the citizens don't. Many fire service organizations are doing little to educate the citizens about their services or in justifying their existence on a regular basis." (Lavoie, 1995, p. 64)

Customer driven marketing can best be defined as "...focusing quality attention on the customer in all areas of the organization to meet or exceed the needs of the customer.", so say Earl Naumann and Patrick Shannon (1992, p.45).

Naumann and Shannon go on to state that, "developing a customer driven organization must first begin with the chief executive of the organization." (1992, p. 50).

"All levels of the organization must be involved in the process, first by receiving training and developing the work force, then understanding the importance of the customer in the process and how they, the worker, fit in that process. Then realize that it could take up to five years to fully implement the customer driven concept. Customer satisfaction, after all, is a firm's only source of revenue and ultimately profit. Before satisfying your customers you

must first find out who they are, how to serve them, the cost to serve them and finally the benefits to serving them." (Cole & Wayland, 1994, p.22).

"Use customers for information, not insight. To allow customers to describe their experiences and define their immediate needs and interpret the data collected to solve customer-related problems. Final points include not to expect great revelations from all customers that some may provide crucial, yet small incremental shifts toward improvements." (Goulillart and Sturdivant 1994, p.116)

From this information gathered from the customer, an operational plan can be developed on how to deliver the service.

"The parts that make up the operational plan become the very practical game plan of how we will deliver service to the customer at show time. Making such a service delivery plan consistently work is a big deal. It requires strong planning, continual practice, smart application and refinement forever- this approach is the only way we can really get good and stay good. The service delivery plan gives us the capability to understand and then focus on what excellent service will look like before the event (the plan); what it will look like while it is going on (the process); and what it will look like after it's over (the outcome)." (Brunacini, 1996, p.27)

The basic issue of what the customer wants is all too often provided as Brunacini notes,

"We have always done the very best we could for our

customers, but we haven't spent much time asking them what they really want ... simply, we decided what we thought they really needed, delivered that service and went home."

(Brunacini, 1996, p.97)

From this common ideal Brunacini provides a solution to providing a better service,

"Customer- centered means that customer needs, perceptions and feelings being to design and drive how the service delivery system looks and behaves. This change requires we include a new dimension of customer consideration as a natural value added piece of our regular problem- solving routine." (Brunacini, 1996, p.91)

The focus on the customer is an essential element of providing a quality service and to provide that service markets the department. Brunacini warns of a pitfall when focusing on service delivery,

"It's pretty easy to develop tunnel vision when we deliver service because we are inclined to be highly preoccupied with and focused on the direct customer and their environment. While we should always give the customer our undivided attention, we should realize that we are always on stage and what we are typically exposed to a lot of people." (Brunacini, 1996, p.43)

In summary, leaders in marketing of emergency services suggest that customer service is an essential element to allow the public and our employees know who we are and what we are about.

PROCEDURES

Research Methodology

This research project employed descriptive research methodology. The research describes what is currently being done in CDF as well as ideas from other service providers. Research materials used came from fire service periodicals, publications and brochures. Personal communications of noted fire service officers in the department were used to augment the research. These individuals work in different areas of California for CDF, in various functions and with distinct perspective on the topic. The individuals used in personal communications were as follows; Assistant Chief Bill Holmes, Operations Division Chief for the Butte Unit. He is a commonly consulted individual on the topic of marketing of CDF. He is on a departmental Incident Management Team, which interfaces with a variety of agencies in both emergent as well as non-emergent activities. Chief Holmes's thoughts are also being utilized by a departmental task force that is addressing the issues noted within this project. Discussions on this topic took place on July 27, 2000. Karen Terrill is the Department Public Information Officer. Personal communications took place on August 16, 2000 in Sacramento, California. Battalion Chief Steve Herzog is a Training Officer at the CDF Academy in Ione, California. Chief Herzog deals extensively with the internal customers through training of recruits to that of current personnel. Herzog also deals with V.I.P.s as well as the media that visit the Academy.

Communications took place on July 24, 2000. Fire Captain Curt Itson is a member of the Prevention Bureau for the Santa Clara Unit, CDF. Captain Itson is involved heavily in public education issues. He is also the Unit Public Information Officer. Personal communications took place on August 20, 2000 in Morgan Hill, California. Fire Apparatus Engineer Jason Wenner is the Assistant Chapter Director for the Santa Clara Chapter of CDF Firefighters, Local 2881 of the International Association of Fire Fighters. Jason deals with a myriad of personnel issues and public information for the Unit and the Chapter. Personal communications took place on July 8, 2000 in Morgan Hill, California. The personal communications took place during informal discussion. Literature currently available expressed opinion and observation from individuals that could not be personally interviewed.

Certain works utilized exceeded the five-year currency typically utilized as a source of good information. Those sources used that exceeded the five-year limit are works used in the education of fire service personnel and private industry regarding this topic.

Questions asked during the personal communications centered on the research questions already noted in this work.

Each subject area expert addressed these questions at various lengths. Most addressed CDF's current situation, while others gave some historical background necessary to clarify the issue.

The project occurred over a six-month period from April to

September of 2000. During this time period, a literary review of the topic and established research questions identified areas supporting and also refuting the problem statement.

Other steps utilized in the research methodology were:

- Examined marketing capabilities of CDF.
- Examined marketing concepts currently used in the industry.
- Examined marketing concepts new to the industry.

To test these concepts, Task 2.6 of the Change Management Model was used. All tasks were used in discovering the results of this project. Assessed were the facilitative techniques, which was to find what supported the change in a need to market the department both internally as well as externally. Informational techniques focused on what concepts existed in and outside the department that would facilitate the change. The attitudinal techniques were assessed in the department through the personal communication of a variety of employees, discussing their views of the marketing effectiveness. Political techniques focused on implications towards the department by its administration as well as political bodies that have cooperative or contractual relationships with CDF.

Limitations

The primary limitation to this Applied Research Project is that there lacks current standards of practice in marketing the department throughout CDF and a marketing plan in general. Formal interviews did not take place due to the fact that certain subject area experts were unavailable during the time

period of the research. A formal survey was not attempted due to the limitation of the six-month timetable to finish the project as per the Executive Fire Officer Program Policy for Applied Research Papers. Due to the wildland fire season during the noted time period that the paper was written and duty assignments to these incidents precluded timely and a sufficient number of returns.

Definition of Terms

CDF: California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

Customer Driven Marketing: focusing quality attention on the customer to meet or exceed their needs.

Customer Survey: A tool used to determine the needs of the customer.

External Customers: includes users of the service outside of the department.

Internal Customers: includes all members within a department.

Marketing: selling of services to the customers, both internal and external.

RESULTS

Answers to Research Questions

1. What strategies are being used to market the department to the public?

Currently CDF does not do a very good job of marketing itself to the public. Attitudinal issues are as noted according to Wenner, "People do not know who we are and what we do. There is no identity in our name that someone in an urban area understands. To them we are nothing more than park rangers."

Many individuals interviewed during personal communications note this perception. Holmes questions, "Who is CDF? What service(s) does it provide? Does every legislator and citizen in California know who the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) is and what we do?" (B. Holmes, personal communications, July 27, 2000)

From an informational perspective, Holmes goes on to state, "CDF is a department in transition. We've come a long way since 1927 in what we do and what the public expects of us. The point is, we need to recognize that change, embrace it and market what we do so we get the public support we need to meet our mission(s) in terms of dollars. CDF is absolutely the worst agency I know in terms of marketing itself. It has hurt us and will continue to hurt us until we change it." (B. Holmes, personal communications, July 27, 2000)

No formal marketing plan exists for the department. It was discovered that each Unit does their own form of marketing. This

is done either by public education programs, providing information via a website or through a variety of other ideas and programs. The only consistency tends to be from using the media to describe the department through reaction to incidents and exploiting these to get the word out. How effective this strategy is, is questionable.

2. What strategies are being used to market the department to its employees?

Utilizing the Change Management Model section 2.6, the following results were determined. Addressing the attitudinal issues, Wenner states,

" In order to sell the department to its employees, we need to create an environment that lets them know who we are and what we do. It goes back to the analogy of if it looks like a duck, quacks like a duck and so forth, than that is what it is. In the case of CDF, we don't quite fit the analogy which we find causes us to have this identity crises internally as to what it is we really are. A for instance is if we are truly an "All Risk" agency or are we strictly a wildland fire agency? Our mission statement is not all too clear in that direction." (J. Wenner, personal communications, July 8,2000)

Continuing with the concept of the department mission statement, Herzog adds, "Our mission statement states that we respond to emergencies, it says nothing about mitigating

them." (S. Herzog, personal communications, July 24, 2000)

Informational and facilitative techniques used by the department are addressed through the communications within the organization. Two common forms are used. According to Terrill," Internally, of course we have the Communique, which is now a quarterly newsletter and the website which provides information for the public and staff via the internet and intranet. The internal email system utilizes the bulletin board which has been pretty effective over the years." (K. Terrill, personal communications, July 27, 2000)

The question remains how effective these mediums truly are. Holmes questions, "Do our own employees have a clear understanding who and what CDF is?"

Assessing the political techniques, according to Itson, "The employees struggle with identity in an organization that does so much and is so diverse that it is impossible to use a blanket marketing plan. We need to identify each area within the department and market accordingly to each. What may work in recruiting members to our organization in the area of fire and EMS will not be effective in recruiting members to our natural resources portion of the department. Currently the department uses the blanket approach." (C. Itson, personal communications, August 20, 2000)

Holmes adds,

"CDF must do a better job in marketing itself if it wishes to attract the best employees it can, gain legislative and public support for competitive salaries and benefits to retain those who started with CDF and not lose them to better paying fire departments." (B. Holmes, personal communications, July 27, 2000)

"The Changing Faces of CDF task force is completing their study and recommendations on the issue of retention and pay. Lack of marketing the department I feel is why we have retention issues of new employees, as well as the fact that we are 40% below the average in pay of similar sized departments in the state. The Union has done comparison surveys that illustrate this fact. Something needs to be done." (J. Wenner, personal communications, July 8, 2000)

It is difficult to determine how effective the marketing to its members have been without further research in this area. Research showed that there currently is no marketing plan in place. The issue of loss of personnel and wages are being addressed by a department task force through the "Changing Faces" document. At the time of the research, details are not available.

3. What concepts can be used by CDF to improve it's marketing to

both the public and it's employees?

To develop a plan, utilizing the four tools that form the promotional mix in an organization is required,

"Advertising, which is designed for quick consumption, rendering information on what the department does, what it needs and how to contact it. Publicity is the tool that develops and disseminates news bringing favorable attention to a product, person, place or cause. Publicity stimulates the interest in the activity. Marketing activities that project your message. Sales promotion ideas are ones that stimulate interest. Personal selling regards relating of positive experiences which encourage others to become involved.

Fortunately, most fire departments already have a positive public image. "All it takes is a creative, enthusiastic representative talking to the right people and your agency can have lots of positive publicity." (Kallman, 1995, p.15)

By focusing on this plan, the department will have something to follow in developing, managing and maintaining an accurate identity campaign. Utilizing a tool such as a customer survey both internally and externally will assist the department on how effective it is in its campaign.

In order to promote the change within the organization, CDF will need to look at ways to improve how it markets itself to both the internal and external customer.

St. John believes that a fire department can control its future by marketing its positive images. (St. John, 1994)

To facilitate this, a marketing strategy must be employed. Holmes notes the lack of information to the public and the employee,

" I doubt the public fully understands what it is we do. Most urban dwellers do not know who or what CDF is. New employees come into CDF not knowing all the services the department provides. The department acronym (CDF) is not well known and does not clearly define the service it most often provides." (B. Holmes, personal communications, July 27, 2000)

To assist with the informational issue to its employees, CDF is attempting to educate its personnel,

" In the academy we introduce all new employees to the variety of things we do. We train them in a variety of areas that many may not have been exposed to. There are plans to take personnel at the Captain and Chief officer ranks and have them become involved in an internship within the department to see what it is we do in an area they are not involved in currently or in the past. They will have to deal with a problem within the organization and report on it, identifying the problem and then creating a possible set of solutions. It will follow the concept used in the National

Fire Academy Executive Fire Officer Program." (S. Herzog, personal communications, July 24, 2000)

Community contacts were found to be used in a variety of ways throughout the department. Use of internal communications via the intranet, newsletters and media coverage of emergencies were found to be utilized extensively. Other tools utilized to communicate to the external customer were those of information sheets, customer surveys and through public education events. Research showed a variety of facilitative promotions and barriers to the change needed. Bureaucracy within government acted as a barrier noted by many personal communications. A positive and motivated work force seemed to be enablers in improving the image and educating the public in what the department was and what it did. Basic identity in the form of a recent uniform change seemed to be an enabler in educating the public of who CDF was.

Attitudes towards wanting the change seemed to be unanimous. All interviewed recognized the continuous need to educate who CDF was and what it could do.

DISCUSSION

1. What strategies are being used to market the department to the public?

"To help the citizens accept why we exist we must continue

to educate them. The citizens need to know the fire department is much different from what it once was." (Lavoie, 1995, p. 63)

To change the perception of what CDF does compared to what the public thinks that we do, ideas offered by Brunacini provide valid insight,

"Delivering service today is becoming more complex and requires that we combine some new stuff with the old. While solving the main problem will always be the basis of our service delivery system, we must now begin to widen our view and move away from the inclination to focus exclusively on the major incident problem. If we are prepared and inclined to deal only with the technical/ tactical part of the event, we necessarily will leave those other parts unsolved when we disappear from the scene. We must begin to assume responsibility to deliver service to the entire situation. Our involvement in virtually every situation should extend beyond solving only the major incident problem." (Brunacini, 1996, p.98)

The issue of focusing away from the traditional fire service attitude of simply responding to emergencies is noted as stated by Brunacini.

"CDF is typically known for its ability to manage large complex emergencies. All responsibility for vegetation fires

on state lands lie with CDF. Having this as the main mission, people feel that we only provide wildland fire suppression. Other fire agencies within the state recognize our ability, at times begrudgingly, that we are the experts in managing these large-scale events. What the public doesn't see through the media for instance, is that we do much more. Even other fire agencies in the state don't recognize our abilities in the "other than wildland fire" emergencies, but we do it and are successful." (S. Herzog, personal communications, July 24, 2000)

Holmes continues the point regarding the lack of identity known throughout the state, as to who the department is by stating,

"In the case of a government organization like CDF, the mission must be clearly defined and recognized by the public (our customers) for what it does. The name, or logo, of the organization must clearly and simply define the service being provided. Every symbol an organization projects must tell the customer (the taxpayer) what it is that it provides. Every citizen in California, whether living in an urban, suburban or rural setting, should know what CDF is and the service it provides." (B. Holmes, personal communications, July 27, 2000)

"Typical public identity of CDF comes from the marketing technique we hang our hat on, media

coverage. We are flashed throughout the homes of the public around the world during our vegetation fire suppression efforts on large fires during the fire season. People see the engines with the CDF logo, they see the protective clothing with CDF Fire printed on the back, they see the aircraft, dozers, crew vehicles. The public sees in the media the prevention efforts early in the fire season about defensible space clearances and other wildland fire prevention. What they do not see is the myriad of other emergency services work that we do. People just don't associate CDF with the All Risk emergency services that we provide." (J. Wenner, personal communications, July 8, 2000)

The obvious is stated in that there is not an effective means of marketing CDF statewide. Discussion with individuals as well as the perception of the public demonstrates a lack of universal knowledge regarding the department. Marketing techniques whether they be customer surveys, informational sheets, media presentation of the department or the internet are not providing adequate returns to the efforts that are put in. Nor there is a direct correlation to the lack of effort placed into marketing the department by the public not fully understanding what we do.

2. What strategies are being used to market the department to its employees?

"We must keep our organization moving and changing to match the needs of our customers and our department members."

(Brunacini, 1996, p.99)

The change in CDF seems to be the greatest challenge that it faces in the near future. According to Wenner,

"The Changing Faces study being done by the department states that we are looking at a massive turnover of personnel due to retirements. The department has grown over the years requiring us to do more with less. Positions were not filled for many years due to cost savings measures. We will now pay the price for short sightedness. The message in the past was that there were few jobs to be had, put in enough seasons and you would eventually be hired. People got sick of putting in numerous years for no gain, they left. We have spent millions of dollars training personnel for other departments. Now we have positions to fill and not enough talent to fill them due to the loss. It is now the department who must redefine who it is to attract those personnel back or to attract and develop new personnel. We need to let them know that they have a future with the department, not an empty promise of employment." (J. Wenner, personal communications, July 8, 2000)

The vision of the department has not changed over time nor is it well communicated to its personnel.

"No one bothers to explain the vision of the department. What are we trying to do and go? What are the goals? Our managers rarely express these to us. We need to keep up with the rest of the fire service. We are still mired in our wildland fire suppression ideals. The rest of what we do seems like nothing more than a necessary evil." (S. Herzog, personal communications, July 24, 2000)

It does not appear that the department markets itself to its employees. A large turnover in its workforce will bring new challenges in the department's identity. During this time of change, facilitative forces to change the department's identity to more of what it does will be far less opposed to the way things have always been done. With the information age, communicating on a large scale will be easier than it was in the past. Tools in place such as the internet and the intranet will assist with this. As a test, a comprehensive survey to its employees would be beneficial in determining effectiveness on how the department presents itself. Employee ideas improving customer service both internally as well as externally need to be rewarded much as they are in private industry. Receiving a buy in from the employees will assist in creating a true identity of the department.

3. What concepts can be used by CDF to improve it's marketing to both the public and it's employees?

CDF will be required to develop an actual marketing strategy to present itself accurately to the public and its employees. This idea is known as a positive image plan. Brunacini describes this as,

"The general objective of the positive image plan is to create the consistent customer observation and opinion that we are professional, under control, functionally focused, serious, effective and friendly. When we show up, we should look like we are there to do business, like we know our business and that we mean business. (Brunacini, 1996, p.53)

Change within CDF is inevitable and will occur regardless of the degree of resistance to change. The organizational implications due to the large number of projected retirements are widespread. With this expected turnover within the organization, change in the culture as how we project ourselves to the customer base would be timely. A projection of who we are and what we do would be best demonstrated at this time. How to accomplish this within the organization is summarized well by Brunacini as,

"Keeping in touch with the customer's needs will become and ongoing fire service challenge. The ability to continually repackage the organization and how we deliver service will

directly regulate our survival in a rapidly changing future." (Brunacini, 1996, p.99)

The concept of finding out what the customer wants, instead of what we as the fire service believes that they need can be determined through the use of a tool such as a customer survey. The survey will tell CDF if we are delivering the proper service as the customer sees it, how successful we deliver the service and overall efficiency in delivering the service.

As Brunacini notes about our attitude in delivering the service, CDF must take the customer perspective and change our delivery to reflect the needs and expectations that the customer has. We must be open to a fairly constant change in order to deliver a proper service. By providing the expected service, we can market that service not only in the content that we deliver, but tote our service as a quality, customer driven one. Utilizing various marketing concepts will let the customer know the service we provide not just what we are capable of providing.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that CDF take a critical look at how it provides services to the customer and that it requires a serious change in how it markets itself to that customer. It is also recommended that CDF realize that these initiatives will be on-going and must be constantly evaluated to meet the changing

needs of their customers. Some of the recommendations that have resulted from this research project include:

1. What strategies are being used to market the department to the public?

- Be proactive with marketing and public relations initiatives. Do not wait for community support to fail before implementing these programs.
- Establish reasonable goals and objectives for the marketing and public relations programs and objectively evaluate the results of your efforts.
- Develop and implement a more aggressive way to market the department than is currently utilized based on the marketing goals and objectives.

CDF will need to develop goals and objectives in how it will market itself to the public. It must look at all elements of its mission statement, who it serves and the types of service it provides. The department must look beyond providing only superior service in one element of its service and look beyond to all the elements. Once the goals and objectives are developed, it must provide an aggressive campaign to implement. Development of the goals and how it will market itself lies with management with input from its internal and external customers. Further research as to what it is the customers expect will be necessary.

2. What strategies are being used to market the department to its employees?

- Evaluate the attitudes of the internal customers, the employees and elected officials, and implement marketing training to change traditional thinking about fire department services. Involve the employees in the marketing and public relations programs.
- Communicate the goals and objectives developed to market the department to its customers. Expand the current methods used so that all internal customers are reached. This should include the political bodies that do not have direct contact with the day to day functions of the department.
- Project a positive image about the department as a model for the employee. Make them want to be part of a great organization and provide superior customer service both internally and externally.

Use of the customer survey for internal customers will assist management with the development of its marketing goals and objectives. It will give management a finger on the pulse of the organization and its needs. Communicating in a variety of ways than are currently used will assist in spreading what it is the organization is trying to accomplish. Communication should be both ways, from the top down and the bottom up. More research on new methods and means to communicate will be necessary.

3. What concepts can be used by CDF to improve it's marketing to both the public and it's employees?

- Use surveys to obtain feedback from all customers and to understand the perception of the quality of your services, as seen through the eyes of our customers.
- Create a positive identity about the department. One that projects who the department is and what they really do.
- Create a plan that markets the department as to who they really are and what they do.
- Develop a logo that is identifiable to the internal and external customer that projects this concept.

The use of a customer survey will elicit the ideas within and outside the organization to assist the department in finding out if it is effective in its set goals. Further research will be required as to how effective customer surveys are, procedure on how to use the survey effectively and to develop an actual survey that can be used statewide by the department.

Creating the positive image will require the development of a marketing campaign based on department goals and objectives. Communications with personnel on how to implement this plan will be needed and check- back with the personnel on their effectiveness based on the customer survey. Use of the new logo and the identity will provide a focus as to what it is we truly do as a department. From these concepts a positive and effective

marketing campaign can be waged and superior customer service provided.

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